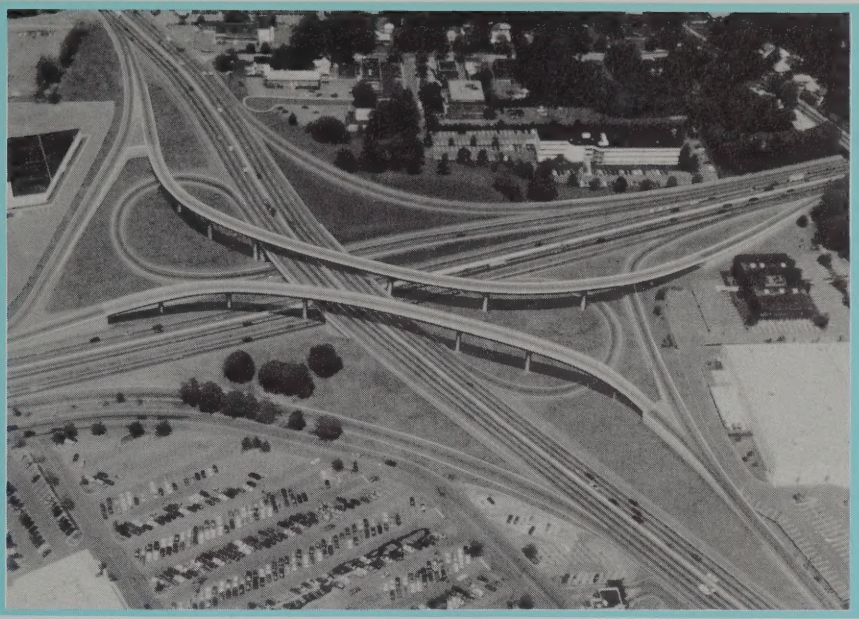
MOBILITY
NJ TRANSIT The Way To Go
Christine Todd Whitman, Governor of New Jersey • John J. Haley Jr., Commissioner of Transportation, Chairman of the Board, NJ TRANSIT • January 1998



A rendering of the new Routes 4 and 17 interchange in Paramus.

1998: bumper year for orange cones

"I do not think I have ever known
A New Jersey highway without an orange cone."
— paraphrase of Joyce Kilmer's "Trees" poem

The orange cone will continue to be one of the most visible sights along New Jersey's highways in 1998. NJDOT expects to award $500 million in construction projects through July 1, 1998.

"There is no question that 1998 will be a banner year for highway construction," said Commissioner John J. Haley Jr. "Projects like the overhaul of the Routes 4 and 17 interchange and final work on the Route 21 freeway will finally get under way."

Ever mindful of impacts on commuters, the Commissioner added: "These projects will create new construction jobs and promote economic growth. As always, our effort to improve future traffic flow will not overshadow the need to keep today's traffic flowing safely and efficiently."

The long-awaited overhaul of the Routes 4 and 17 interchange in Paramus (Bergen County) will probably be the most visible new project this year. The 65-year-old cloverleaf was state of the art when it was built, one of the first cloverleafs in the world. Designed to carry 9,000 vehicles during peak hours, it is currently carrying double that amount. Congestion at the interchange has inhibited growth in Bergen County for decades. The revamped interchange will expand capacity and greatly improve traffic flow. The project will take three years to complete during which lane closures will be limited to off-peak hours.

Another long awaited project in northern New Jersey is the completion of the missing link of the Route 21 freeway in Clifton and Passaic. Stalled for 25 years, this project finally got moving under the Whitman Administration. Two of the three contracts are under way and the third will be awarded in 1998.

Completion of the freeway will improve links to major northern New Jersey highways: Routes 22, 78, 280, 3, 46, 80 and the Garden State Parkway. The highway will be constructed entirely on new alignment and will be open to traffic in 2002.

Several key projects will start up in the southern part of the state: replacement of two Route 47 bridges over East and West creeks in Cape May County and interchange revisions and a bridge replacement at Routes 322 and 50 in Atlantic County.

Noise walls going up along Routes 76 and 295 over the past year will be completed by the end of 1998. This $35 million dollar project will provide 11 miles of highway noise mitigation, from the Walt Whitman bridge to Route 73 in Burlington County.

Other projects scheduled to begin in 1998 include a new interchange on I-280 at Edwards Road in Morris County; noise walls along I-287 in Middlesex County; Route 124 resurfacing in Morris County; I-78 ramp improvements in Newark; Route 15 and House Corner Road interchange improvements in Sussex County; replacement of the Route 35 bridge over the Navesink River and the Route 21 Viaduct in Newark.

Route 70 jam to be broken in Ocean, Monmouth

More than $20 million will be spent during the current fiscal year to end one of the worse traffic bottlenecks for motorists in Ocean and Monmouth counties — Route 70 from Brick Township to the Brielle Circle.

"During rush hours and the height of the summer vacation season at the Jersey Shore, it's not uncommon for cars to move at a snail's pace," said Commissioner John J. Haley Jr. "It's what happens when a two-lane highway designed to accommodate a rural area has to deal with the traffic created by a population explosion and an influx of tourists.

"This stretch of highway and the bridge crossing over the Manasquan River were well-suited for the first half of the 20th century, but they are not equipped to deal with current demands, let alone what we expect during the first half of the 21st century."

At present, Route 70 shrinks from a four- and six-lane highway in the Laurelton section of Brick Township, Ocean County, to a two-lane road at Jack Martin Boulevard. It runs four miles through one of the more densely populated and highly commercialized areas of Ocean County and continues over the Manasquan Bridge until the Brielle Circle in Monmouth County.

Six signalized intersections along the route only slow the traffic and add to the list of impediments for drivers. Motorists attempting left turns have been involved in collisions, a situation that further deteriorates during severe rains. Two crossings of the Brushy Neck Creek are flood-prone.

The dualization project, which will take several construction seasons to complete, will add a lane in each direction of Route 70, expand the shoulders, extend the barrier curbs and introduce jughandles for all left turn and U-turn movements.

A cut through the Brielle Circle will ease delays now experienced at this location and stream crossings will be improved to end flooding.

The existing moveable bridge at the Manasquan River, a source of traffic backups during summer months, will be replaced on an expedited basis with a modern fixed-span structure at a cost of $12.7 million. The goal is to build the new bridge during Fiscal Year 2000.

NJDOT representatives have been meeting with, and canvassing, local business and marina owners to discuss the proposed height of the structure. Once this is determined, the project will move into final scope development.

Speaking of Route 70 ...

How many people who use Route 70 are aware that 60 years ago the Legislature named the segment that extends through Ocean and Monmouth counties the "John Davidson Rockefeller Memorial Highway"?

Probably as few as those who know that the following year the Legislature decided to honor the founder of the Rockefeller dynasty by also naming the entire length of the highway, from what was then known as the King's Highway Circle in Camden County to the Shark River in Monmouth County, after him.

Why name a New Jersey highway after a wealthy industrialist?

By the time Rockefeller's Standard Oil of New Jersey was struck down by the nation's highest court, he had retired from active business and was devoting his time to giving away a large part of his fortune. By the time he died in 1937, Rockefeller had funneled more than $530 million of his own money into charitable foundations. An immense sum today, it was considered astronomical back then.

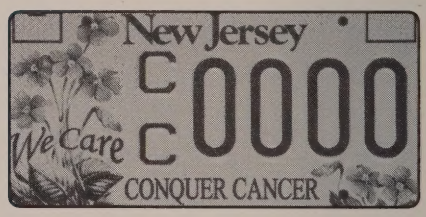
Rockefeller spent considerable time in New Jersey, and not just to watch over his business empire. He had a summer estate in Lakewood where Ocean County Park is now located. The park, which still has a wilderness feel to it today, is near Route 70. At the time, the highway was known as Route 40.

Following his death, the Legislature decided to honor his memory by designating Route 40 the John Davidson Rockefeller Memorial Highway.

"His interest in New Jersey's industries contributed much to the industrial prosperity and welfare of the citizens of New Jersey," noted the enabling legislation.

"The people of New Jersey desire to make some permanent memorial to him for his services to them and to mankind."

In 1945, a 60-mile stretch of Route 70, from Marlton to the Brielle Circle, was designated a limited access roadway because it traverses the scenic New Jersey Pinelands, an area known to botanists throughout the world for its wealth of plants and unique flora. Since then, the Department of Transportation has tried to preserve and maintain the delicate beauty of the native landscape adjacent to the roadway.



The attractive Conquer Cancer plate is now available at any Motor Vehicle agency or by calling toll free 1-888-486-3339 from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday. Proceeds support cancer research projects in New Jersey.

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Governor reviews winter operations with Haley

Governor Christine Todd Whitman toured a winter operations site in Mercer County with Commissioner John J. Haley Jr. in November. Haley assured the Governor that salt supplies, remote weather sensors, NJDOT and contractor trucks and auxiliary snow workers are in place for whatever range of weather winter delivers.

NJ TRANSIT tests new fuel technology

NJ TRANSIT, TCT Transit and the National Biodiesel Board (NBB) are bringing the farmlands of America to the streets of New Jersey.

As part of Governor Whitman's Advanced Technology Demonstration Project, the three groups launched a four-month test program in December that blends diesel fuel with a fuel derived from vegetable oils. The test program supports efforts to reduce diesel fuel emissions in New Jersey.

The NBB has agreed to provide the organic fuel known as biodiesel free of charge, thanks to a grant from the United Soybean Board. The "B-20" fuel, which was developed by Twin Rivers Technologies, Inc. of Quincy, MA, will be used in 19 Flxible transit buses owned by NJ TRANSIT and operated by TCT Transit Services in Monmouth County.

John J. Haley Jr., Transportation Commissioner and NJ TRANSIT Board Chairman said: "This latest project is another part of Governor Whitman's clean air strategy, delivering a comprehensive advanced technology program to the Garden State.

"This past year, NJ TRANSIT's Board of Directors has taken a series of steps that will allow the agency to explore several different technologies in public/private partnerships that could lead to new standards in the bus industry."

B-20, also known as "Envirodiesel," is an organic fuel made from vegetable oils like soy that are blended with traditional petroleum diesel fuel. The NBB believes the new product will reduce emission of particulate matter by up to 45 percent and provide reductions in carbon monoxide, hydrocarbons, sulfur dioxide and other emissions.

During the four-month test period, NJ TRANSIT, TCT Transit and NBB will evaluate the buses using the new biodiesel fuel under a variety of operating conditions to give all three parties a clear understanding of the effectiveness of biodiesel fuel. The tests will include monitoring of diesel emissions, fuel consumption and engine performance and reliability.

After the test period is over, the final results will be reviewed before long-term applications are considered.

Since Governor Whitman announced her plans to move ahead with the demonstration programs in January, NJ TRANSIT has also:

- awarded a $2.5 million contract in March to Orion Bus Industries, Inc. of Mississauga, Ontario and Oriskany, NY to manufacture four, low-floor hybrid electric transit buses and associated spare parts.
- awarded a $24.5 million contract in June to Motor Coach Industries (MCI) of Winnipeg, Canada to manufacture 50 Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) "cruiser" buses and associated spare parts. NJ TRANSIT has also established a joint partnership on this project with engine manufacturer Detroit Diesel.
- awarded a $7.3 million construction contract in June to Hall Construction Co., Inc. of Wall Township to design and build a new 7,000-square-foot facility adjacent to Howell Garage in Monmouth County to fuel, maintain and store new Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) buses.
- started exploring the use of the emerging fuel cell technology.

The hybrid-electric buses combine electric and diesel fuel technology using a power plant that is smaller than the traditional diesel bus engine. It requires fewer mechanical parts and is designed to reduce diesel emissions. NJ TRANSIT's purchase also includes the use of low-floor technology, complying with the Americans with Disabilities Act but eliminating the costly maintenance of wheelchair lifts.

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Major runway rehabilitation at Trenton Mercer Airport nears completion

The main runway at Trenton Mercer Airport in Ewing Township is being rehabilitated as part of a four-phase project costing more than $3 million.

"Work is nearly finished," reported Commissioner John J. Haley Jr. "This facility is already one of New Jersey's premiere publicly-owned, pubic use airports. When this project is complete, its attractiveness to commercial uses and commuters will be even greater."

With the help of the NJDOT's Division of Aeronautics, the Federal Aviation Administration and the Mercer County Department of Transportation and Infrastructure, high intensity runway lights and runway end identifier lights are being replaced. In addition, cracks in the 6,006-foot primary runway have been sealed and sections have been replaced. Pavement overlay, grooving and marking will round out the project.

Work is being done with the cooperation of users of the airport, including Eastwind Airlines, several corporate aviation departments, the Army National Guard, the State Police and the fixed base operator, Ronson Aviation.

"The project was designed to minimize the impact on vital aviation operations," Haley said. "Heavy paving was done overnight so the runway could reopen in time for Eastwind Airlines to resume scheduled morning service."

Traprock Industries of Kingston, the paving contractor, completed the bulk of the 38,000-ton overlay in 11 work days. A total of 6,000 tons of the FAA-specified asphalt mix were installed in just one night.

The Mercer County engineer will nominate the project for the Bituminous Concrete Industry Association's annual award.

Commercial airline service began at Trenton Mercer airport during the summer of 1995. The airport also supports a large contingent of helicopters and military aircraft. It is base for 175 aircraft and handles about 146,000 departures and arrivals a year.

NJ TRANSIT tests new fuel technology *continued from page 3*

They are scheduled for delivery early this year.

The cruiser bus purchase will allow NJ TRANSIT to test CNG technology along the Route 9 corridor, the largest and heaviest traveled bus corridor in the state and will help to reduce emissions in Ocean, Monmouth, Middlesex, Union, Essex, Hudson and Bergen counties, and New York City.

NJ TRANSIT hopes the new fuel cell technology will eliminate the need for heavy duty diesel engines and transmissions which would reduce maintenance costs significantly.